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MOODS and MEMORIES

EDMUND LEAMY

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MOODS AND MEMORIES

MOODS *and* MEMORIES

BY

EDMUND LEAMY
Author of "My Ship, and Other Verses," etc.

NEW YORK
THE DEVIN-ADAIR CO.
1920

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JUN 12 1920

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TO

MY BROTHER

HUGH

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FOREWORD

There is an Irish accent runs through Edmund Leamy's verse . . . the gaiety, the wistfulness, the pathos, the eloquence of the Celt are there—the appealing Celtic cadence which is more than merely a cadence of speech, being, in fact, a cadence of the spirit behind the speech and putting its stamp upon the speech. One finds a strain of wistfulness in the work of many Irish writers of verse who are not really poets . . . or rather, finds that they have been consciously striving for it. Mr. Leamy is a poet, and he speaks what is in him without straining or striving consciously for it; the accent that is native to his soul and to his lips works into his verse without his laboring for it or being, apparently, aware of it.

His poems produce an effect of authenticity and genuineness because he has first felt and lived them. I know that he has first felt and lived them, for it is my privilege to know him, and to have known something about his life and

experiences during the years when these poems were writing themselves. But they are so intensely personal, so evidently the reaction to life and circumstances of one particular definite individual, that I think I should detect the genuineness of these expressions—would be able to say to myself that they are not merely the exercises of a capable literary man trying on various costumes—had I known nothing of the writer or of his history.

The general reader, however, may gain additional pleasure and interest from knowing that many of these poems were written while Mr. Leamy was serving as a Lieutenant in the British Army (the King's African Rifles) in German East Africa. I know of no poems reflecting any phase of the late war that have for me more poignant appeal than such things as the dedicatory poem of this book, and "Wounded on the Veldt," "Gone West," "The Departure," "The Soldier," etc., etc. Mr. Leamy does not beat the big drum and make skirl the shrill bag-pipe when he writes of the war; he seems always to tell truthfully, with a poet's truthfulness, how

some thing that he knew well affected him personally. Compare Kipling's "Danny Deever" with the poem called "The Traitor" in this book. They are both about the same thing . . . a man is being hanged, and his comrades in arms are witnessing the execution . . . and Kipling's famous verse is more impressive in a technical way, it has more of the military rhythm and makes a more direct assault upon the nerves. But I think it is an external performance, however impressive, compared to "The Traitor." In the latter poem one cannot escape the feeling that this actual Leamy, present in his own person, did individually and personally experience these particular emotions recorded: emotions that were not the conventional common property of the entire regiment, but his own, no matter what the rest of the command might have been thinking.

To dwell upon the war poems too long is to give a false idea of the book's content, for they are not preponderantly numerous: on the contrary, there is rich variety here. For an edged, scornful, piece of work in a very "modern"

mood and manner, look at "Afternoon Tea." It is not like the majority of Mr. Leamy's poems either in matter or treatment . . . and yet, how well it is done! It would be rash to predict the growth of a new tendency in a poet's work from a few samples of this sort; but it does show that when he wants to Mr. Leamy can say something to the point regarding human nature in its familiar, social, conversational environments as well as when he views it amid rawer, uncouther, war-like or workaday surroundings. Perhaps he will develop this faculty and give us a number of these sharp portraits . . . adding another weapon to his equipment.

He is exceedingly well equipped as it is . . . he has a feeling for words and for rhythms, he has his individual point of view, he has the eye which seizes upon the salient fact which signifies the whole, he has his lnheritance of glamour, and, more than all, he has a singing soul.

Don Marquis.

For permission to reprint many of the poems in this volume my thanks are due to the editors and publishers of the following publications: *New York Evening Sun, New York Times Sunday Magazine, New York Times, The Saturday Evening Post, Adventure, House and Garden, Contemporary Verse, Breezy Stories, McClure's Magazine, New York American, Uganda Herald, The East African Standard, The Designer, The People's Home Journal, Woman's Weekly, New York Sunday Sun, Sea Power, Boy's Life, Munsey's Magazine, Snappy Stories, Modern Electrics.*

E. L.

PROEM

Comrades I have left behind me
In that far-off southern land,
When at dusk the stars come stealing
Do you dream and understand?

Do you think of other nightfalls—
Bom-bom hidden in the bush;
Sniper's bullet hitting blindly;
Haunting dread of bayonet rush?

Do you, seated by the camp-fire,
Live again those olden days,
Hopeless treks through hopeless country
For our little meed of praise?

Lone patrols with stars for guidance,
Hidden death on every side,
Only faith to keep us going,
Dauntless faith and white man's pride.

Then at last the distant rail-head,
Comrades, camp and friendly fire,
Food and drink and peace and comfort,
Haven of the heart's desire.

Night upon the lonely gubba,
And the West wind sighing low.
Don't you miss them in your dreaming?—
Crowded hours of long ago.

Full they were with grief and laughter,
Love and hate time and again,
Death, disease, and dread, and danger,
When we lived—and died like men.

To you of the far-off old life,
You who dream and understand,
O'er ten thousand leagues of distance,
Here, I stretch a comrade's hand.

MOODS

WOUNDED ON THE VELDT

(*For My Mother*)

The stars are shining—they are my mother's
eyes;
The wind cries softly—I know it is her cry;
The lovely night caresses—'tis her arms—
Oh, God above, I am content to die!

THE TAVERN BY THE SEA

There's a musty little tavern at the back of
God-knows-where
On a tiny little twisted cobbled street,
Its gas lamps through the windows throw a
fuggy muggy glare,
And it's there that of an evening sailors meet.

Till its closing time at midnight one by one they
come and go,
And the hours are passed in revelry and song,
And yarns of days sea-faring, sun and shine
and storm and snow,
And good red rum to drink the evening long.

But when the last lone reveller has vanished
down the street,
And the moon rides low and palely in the sky,
Then they come, they come all silently on swiftly
moving feet,
The others—sailor men of days gone by.

And very jovial shades are they, and very glad to be
Again within the tavern as of old,
Swapping lies, and salty stories of the deathless sweeping sea,
Tales of life, and love, and lure of yellow gold.

A ghostly pot-boy serves them beakers filled with ghostly ale,
And a ghostly host smiles broadly from the bar,
And they drink deep drinks with laughter till the dawn comes grey and pale,
When they pay their scores and go with the last star.

And I'm told that these old sailors, though it may not all be true,
Are very, very wicked, bad and bold,
And they sail on ghostly cruises o'er the ocean's trackless blue,
On ghostly ships in search of ghostly gold.

And whether they're successful, I believe it matters not,
For ever there's good cheer and company,
And a mate to swap a yarn with, and a man to share a pot
Of ale, within the tavern by the sea.

And it may not quite be heaven, but what more would sailors ask
When the long trick is finished and is over,
But a table in the tavern, and a talk about the task,
And a mug of ale with some old fellow-rover!

THE ROAD TO LARCHMONT

The road that leads to Larchmont
  Is very, very fair,
With music in the singing wind
  And perfume in the air,
With nodding trees and friendly trees
  And gladness everywhere.

There are glimpses of Long Island Sound
  And glistening bits of sand,
And little green-white cottages
  In little gardens stand,
Till one would think that God Himself
  Watched o'er that pleasant land.

And you can hear the song of birds,
  And you can hear the sea
Come whispering from o'er the world
  Where lovely islands be,
As sweet as any fairy dream
  In far off Arcady.

The laughing fields, the smiling flowers,
The sunshine sweet, the near,
Dear host of golden memories—
But who (ah, exiles here),
Who knows the road to Larchmont town
So very, very dear?

Who knows the road to Larchmont, here,
And who is here to care
If nodding tree is friendly tree,
And perfume is the air?
Who knows but I whose heart aches now
With longing to be there?

BECAUSE

Because I am so very far away
From all dear things . . .
Because each sun-lit, never-ending day
Caressing clings
The memory of little folks at play,
My tired heart sings.

Ah, sings and sighs e'en as the West wind sighs—
With joy or woe—
For glory of the days 'neath other skies
Which we did know,
For love that shone deep in a mother's eyes
So long ago.

THE TRAITOR

I saw them hang a man one time
From the top of a gallows high,
And he was a louse, with the soul of a louse,
And richly deserved to die;
But as I saw him swinging there,
His body so limp and weak,
That never again would laugh any more
Nor love, nor sing, nor speak,
A twinge of pity came into my heart
That one of my own should die
By the hangman's hand in a foreign land,
Under an alien sky.

But he had planned the cowardliest deed
That ever a man can do—
To sell us all to the enemy
When we thought him straight and true.
But we found him out. At a drumhead court
We sentenced him to die

At 6 o'clock when the gay young sun
  Should crimson the Eastern sky.
And so he swung from the gallows tree,
  And my thoughts went far away
To a woman who waited expectantly
  His safe return some day.

And oh, I hope that she never learns
  The death that his has been;
That she holds her dream that he travelled West
  Radiant, brave and clean.
And if ever I chance to meet with her,
  Which God in His heaven forbid,
May she never read in the eyes of me
  The thing that is better hid.
But should she ask, as a woman will,
  If he went like a man to die,
I hope to be able to look at her straight,
  And on the word of a soldier—lie!

GOOD-BYE, OLD MAN

(*Lieut. E. P. Killed in Action G. E. A. 1917*)

Good-bye, old man, may the Unknown Way
Be easy for your going—
May the suns that light your new-found day
Be kindly in their showing.

May every prayer we breathe for you
Find answer in the glories
That wait you There, as dear and true
As faith in fairy stories.

And may you sometimes from the Light
Steal back to us unknowing,
And greet us lone, at the dawn of night
When the soft west wind is blowing.

SISTER

One does not look for beauty in a shed,
  Nor in a hospital upon the sand;
Neither in the loneliness
  Of a foreign land.

But in a corrugated iron ward,
  Amid the glory of a sunset hour
And the far-off wilderness—
  I found a flower.

GONE WEST

(On Active Service G. E. A. 1917)

"It's goin' on twenty-two months now
Since I've been home," he said,
"But I'm goin' when it's over
And the Boche's power is dead;
And mayhap there'll be a woman,
And a baby's curly head."

He was sick and tired of Africa,
But in fine high feather,
So I cursed the Hun, and wished him luck,
And we had a drink together—
One for him, and one for her
In all kinds of weather.

And then upon a lone patrol,
Beneath the sunny skies,
He went as brave men go to death
With clear and shining eyes,
And a lonely grave in Africa
Is all his paradise.

Not all, for oh, the good God knows
The dreams of his own dead,
And I think in that far heaven
There's another home instead—
And a lovely woman waiting,
And a little curly head.

THE DEPARTURE

(*For My Mother*)

No bands were playing merrily,
  No flags were flying gay;
No handkerchiefs were fluttering
  As I went on my way
Along the street to crimson war
  Upon a sunny day.

No hand was held in greeting out,
  None breathed a good-luck plea,
None blew a kiss, a farewell kiss—
  Then, lonely as could be,
I thought I heard your dear-loved voice
  Come whispering to me.

I thought I heard you whispering,
  Your lips seemed very near;
Your breath was sweet upon my cheek
  And softly in my ear
I thought I heard you murmuring—
  "Good-bye, God bless you, dear!"

No bands were playing merrily
As I went on my way
Along the road to crimson war
Upon a sunny day;
But, oh, the heart of me that thrilled
To what it heard you say.

THE SOLDIER

This morning in my tent I woke to find
The warm sun shining through the door
On cot, and walls, and floor,
And, oh, his smile was generous and kind.

I had not seen his face for many days,
Nor known the glory of his light, nor felt
The warm touch of his hand.
Too long the bitter mist had veiled his rays
And cloaked in cruel cold the mountain top
Which overlooks the distant stretching veldt
And is my home.
Home! In this far foreign land
A tent upon the mountain. And my eyes dim
With straining, watching for the grim
Enemy that does not come.

I saw my home fragrant with the scent of many
flowers,
Saw once again the well-remembered things,

The pictures on the walls that I have known
since childhood hours—
"Doggies in Disgrace," "The Sunset Sea,"
"The Roll Call." There came to me
Visions of old furniture, the things that stood
Within the living rooms. The polished wood
Of sideboards grave with age, and cabinets
Whose inlaid doors close hid from idle gaze
Ancient relics, treasures, gifts of olden days.

And there within that best-loved room of all—
The room of books and shaded lamps and cozy
chairs
And pipes in racks upon the wall,
And dim scent of tobacco, and carpet worn
With loving tread by reverential feet
That sought a haven from a world of cares,
And found in this retreat
The peace that dear contentment knows—
Here stood I, and a rose
In a vase upon the table nodded at me
Familiarly
As if 'twere yesterday. Ah, God! . . . Then
up the stairs

Unerring footsteps led me straight in line
To one dear room that in the ages past
Was mine.
I toyed with curtains, fingered sheet and bed,
Touched photos on the wall and knew
How frail is mortal memory
So few were now recalled. My head
Was filled with wild, queer longings.

The sun came in the window
And I could hear
Very near
The song of birds within the trees
And on the breeze
The laugh of little children playing in the sun,
And wafted to my nostrils came the sweet, salt
tang of sea,
And merrily
On blue Long Island Sound flashed by the little
ships,
Their white sails greeting me—
An old friend returned.

And then I heard voices down below,
Voices I shall know
When ears of mine are deaf to other sounds—
Down, down on winged feet
Straight, fleet
To the best-loved room I flew
(Ah, well I knew)
Into the arms of those more dear than all—
Oh, Christ! the dear joy of it. . . .

In my tent upon the lonely mountain
So I dreamed;
And the sun shone, and all seemed
Real, true.
I wondered, "Is the dear day near
The dear day of returning, or . . ." The
sun went out,
The mist came, hid the mountains, and as of old
I shivered with the cold—
Or this time—was it fear?

DEAD FIRES

I'm sick of the endless silence,
  I'm tired of the endless hills,
I'm wearied of bush and palm trees,
  And the peace that the East instills;
I'm sick of the sight of natives
  And the smell of the whining wind—
And I long for a day in the world away
  With the things that I left behind.

A night in the old Red Lion,
  A fling in the old, old way,
A pair of red lips to love me
  And eager to laugh or play;
A pal of the old days near me
  Ever and ever so kind,
The crash of song the wild night long,
  And the dream that I left behind.

The perfume of violets hidden
  And lost in a woman's hair,

A dance for the days forgotten,
And a kiss for an old despair,
A tryst for an olden keeping
When eyes that are wise were blind
The madding nights, the whirl of lights,
And the follies I left behind.

I'm tired of the wild, wide open,
The silence, the peace, the rest,
And I long for the din of cities—
But I know that the Wilds are best,
For the dreams that I dreamed are banished
Where never a man may find,
And my heart lies dead with the days long fled,
And the faith that I left behind!

ANCHORAGE

Some day when I have become very rich
And I'm tired of sailing the sea,
I'll anchor my ship by a far-away isle
Where the buccaneers used to be.

I'll carry a cargo of good red rum,
And a ton of tobaccy or so,
And charter a skipper to spin me yarns
O'er the pipe bowl's cheery glow.

And this skipper of mine he must be old
And bronzed with a deep-sea tan,
He must have travelled the wide world o'er,
And he must have lived like a man.

He must have measured a woman's love,
And found it as false and frail
As the catspaw puff on an oily sea
When we prayed for a bellying sail.

And he and I, we will spend the day,
The night when the night is come,
In smoking tobaccy, and swapping tales,
And drinking our glass of rum,

And talking to shades of bygone men—
Pew, Silver, and Captain Kidd,
Who'll tell us then, when we will not care,
The place where their treasure is hid.

And mayhap a dream in my heart of hearts
Will stir as I go to rest
To bring me back to the long ago,
And the one I loved the best.

And this is the life for a sailorman
Who is tired of the restless sea—
A Mate, Tobaccy, A tot of rum,
And a Dream for company!

PRAYER BEFORE ACTION

If I should die who so have loved the world
Of sunshine and of laughter and of song,
The lovely dreams each new-born day unfurled
Before that dread hour came and all was wrong—

Ere stalked grim War with devastating breath,
With lengthening shadow and with ruthlessness,
Rank red rapine, cold murder, bloody death,
Dumb hours of waiting and of hopelessness—

If I should die, if I this life should give,
Lord God in Heaven, let that moment's pain
Help win for those dear ones who yet may live
The world in all her loveliness again!

PETER PAN'S PROMISE

(*A poem for very little children*)

Upon a day of summer sun
In far off fairy Kensington
To those dear gardens that are there
Where everything is gay and fair,
I went and sat upon the grass
Beside the path where children pass,
To see them as they gaily ran
To greet the elfin Peter Pan.

That little laughing clever boy
Who plays his flute with wanton joy
The livelong lovely summer day
Till all the world's compelled to play,
And all the birds from all the trees
Come flying down the singing breeze,
And men and maids from Fairyland
Come dancing round him hand in hand.

And as I sat there by myself
Sly Peter Pan, the little elf—
Perhaps he thought he heard me call—
Hopped down from off his pedestal,
And coming over close to me
He whispered in a voice of glee
That some day he was going to run
Away, away from Kensington—

The Round Pond and the Serpentine,
The Broad Walk that's so very fine,
And all the things he held so dear
Because he wished to visit here,
To cross the sea some sunny day
And with those other children play
Whom he had never, never seen,
In this land where he'd never been.

And so some morning if you find
Your window open and the blind
All tossed aside, jump out of bed
And run to greet him, for he said
That he was coming here to play

With all *good* children, some fine day;
So you must always be as good
As little children always should,
And never cross, and bold, and glum,
Or Peter Pan will never come!

FAITH IN FAIRIES

When I was a child I used to know
A lovely spot in the twilight glow,
Where, half-afraid of the dimming light,
And all ashamed of our growing fright,
We stood in the hush of an ancient tree
And heard low sounds of minstrelsy:
Sweet notes of music magic and fair
As the song of the wind on the summer air
And the hum of waves on a silver strand,
Or the song of birds in a foreign land.
And then, if we had been very good
The live-long day—in the shadowy wood
Perhaps, perhaps 'neath a near-by tree
In a swirling, whirling ring we'd see
Tiny figures all dancing wild
To gladden the heart of a wide-eyed child;
Dancing, dancing as merrily
As the waves that ripple a moonlit sea,
As light as the dew on a half-hid flower,
As fleet as the fleeting time-sped hour,

Till sudden we knew the day was done
And vanished completely the friendly sun.
Then fast, as fast as our feet could go
We'd scamper home, and with cheeks aglow
Climb up-stairs to each tiny bed,
And there in the nursery, what they'd said
We'd whisper over, each fairy word,
The things we'd seen—('Twould be absurd
To grown-up folks—but we'd never tell
What we'd seen and heard in the fairies' dell)—
Till the Sandman came with his stealthy creep
And we wandered off to the Land of Sleep
To dream dear dreams of fairy skies
That can only be seen through children's eyes.

And though that was ever so long ago,
And war runs riot, some day, I know,
When the world again is dear and fair
And the flowers abloom, I'll go back there;
Back to the dear old friendly tree
And the fairy dell, for I know I'll see
Once again, 'cause my heart is young,
And my lips still speak the olden tongue,

The little crowd in the swirling ring,
And my ears will hear the songs they sing,
The magic music so sweet and fair
As the song of the wind on the summer air,
As the hum of the waves on a silver strand,
Or the song of birds in a foreign land.

TO A DEAD POET

Dear lyric voice now stilled in sleep,
  No more your lips shall sing
Of sun and star and sea and tree
  And every living thing—

No more for us who linger here—
  But far away up There
The little angel children come
  And cluster round your chair.

And laugh with you and play with you
  As happy as your own—
The little ones you left behind
  When your winged soul had flown,

And oh, you sing them lullabies,
  Nor ever song so dear,
And all of heaven grows hushed and still,
  And God draws close to hear.

TOP O' THE MORNING!

Smell of the woods in the morning;
The sun shines gold through the trees,
And the heavens are filled with music
From the lips of the wide-eyed breeze.

And who's for a plunge in the water
A swim in the laughing lake?
Be quick! There is breakfast to follow
And there still is the fire to make.

I'm in! What a splash! Are you ready?
Who, who would lie lazy asleep
When all of the wide world is calling
With the lure of the lake blue and deep?

So come, that's the stuff, all together,
Swim, swim with a stroke true and straight
To the boat; and the first back, the winner—
Great ginger! But swimming is great!

The first back, the first one to breakfast!
  Then the trail once again and the fun—
The day lies alluring before us,
  And the morning is only begun!

THE MASTER

They cried aloud, "There is no God, we rule!
We hold the sky and earth to our sweet sway,
The sea our servant is, lightning our tool,
The night, our lamps make light as sunlit day,
While buildings rise like mountains at our nod—
For masters are we here—There is no God!"

But one who heard cried, "Answer questions three!"
They bowed their heads, and he, the doubter, said,
"Can ye control the rolling of the sea?
Or give back life to one who long is dead?
Can ye give birth to one bright summer's day?"
But shamed, they answered not and went away!

AFTERNOON TEA

They sat around and drank weak, watered tea;
They babbled, gossiped, talked incessantly
Of Mrs. So-and-So, and this and that,
Of someone's assignations, someone's hat;
Where *does* she get the money for those clothes?
Why no one tells her husband goodness
knows . . .
And I sat still, and somehow did not care—
For You were not as they—and You were there.

And then You spoke:
You too joined in the scandal and the sin,
And answered spicy tale with spicier tale;
Your lips took on the selfsame leering grin;
Your blushless cheeks as marble and as pale;
I felt the scales drop down from off my eyes
That leaped to see your depthless, naked heart,
Your soul revealed through its mad mesh of lies,
The nothingness of You all rent apart. . . .

I wish to God that You or I had died
Before I saw so shattered neath mine eyes
My faith in an Ideal, all my pride,
My love for You, my dreams of paradise!

ANTICIPATION

There is joy in the flaming of the fires,
But the greater pleasure lies
In the anticipation of delights, desires,
Half granted, half refused,
The acquiescence sometimes found, confused,
Shy, yet daring, in a woman's eyes.

WANDER WHISPERS

Can't you hear them, can't you hear them, in
the bustle of the street,
'Mid the rattle of the traffic and the noise of
tramping feet,
'Mid the splitting sound of sirens from the
river, and the hum
Of the swiftly moving autos? Can't you hear
them as they come,
The voices of the woodlands and the mountains
and the sea
And the wide and open prairies, where we're
hankering to be?

They are whispering at night-time, they are
clamorous by day,
And your heart is almost bursting as it hears
the things they say,
And you feel the old, old longing for the wood-
lands and the wind,

For the camp-fire, for the river, for the things
we left behind
When the summer time was over and the winter
with its snow
Showed the trail that led us cityward and gave
the order—"Go!"

But it's spring again, it's spring-time, and the
ancient voices call,
And you can't resist the magic of the music
they let fall
As they whisper of the forests, as they murmur
of the sea;
Oh, it's back we must be going where a wanderer
would be!
It's farewell to dreary cities and to dreams that
droop and die,
For we seek again the open, and the wide, o'er-
arching sky!

ON MORRIS STREET

To-day I saw a dragon fly on Morris Street,
A small thing, a gay thing, with whirring wings and fleet,
And up it went and down it went, as lost as lost could be,
Searching for the sunny grass and wind in shady tree.

But never blade of perfumed grass, and never shadowy glen,
And never song of care-free bird from out the streets of men,
And never sign to point the way back to where there lie
The green fields, the wide fields under God's blue sky.

And so it flew, a lost thing, with whirring wings and fleet,

A timid thing, a frightened thing, along the
dingy street;
And oh, I wished to show to it the laughing trail
I know
To the gay fields, the green fields, where my
own heart would go.

FREIGHTERS

Whenever I wake in the morning
And the smell of the sea is strong,
My heart becomes filled with yearning
As my soul becomes filled with song,
And it's all I can do to prevent me
Going down to the docks right away
And boarding the very first freighter,
The very first salt-spattered freighter,
That's sailing for ports far to eastward
And is heading for down the bay.

Now, passenger ships are like ladies,
And timid they be with fears;
They know not the wander spirit
As they lie at their painted piers,
And like ladies they stick to the fair ways
Where never a buccaneer trod,
But any old salt-spattered freighter,
Oh, any old-time honoured freighter,
Will sail to the uncharted islands
And steer by its trust in God.

So whenever I wake in the morning
And the lure of the sea is there,
It's adventure that calls me, calls me,
And never was call so fair,
And it's all I can do to prevent me
Going down to the docks right away
And boarding the very first freighter,
The very first dream-laden freighter,
That's headed for fathomless oceans
Down the path of the dawning day!

THE BIG DRAYS

Up and down on West Street the big drays go—
Wagonloads of merchandise passing to and fro,
Up from ships, and down to ships, regular as song,
Ceaselessly and endlessly the whole day long.

Some bear but prosaic things, sacks to fill the hold,
Flour and wheat and cotton things worth a miser's gold;
Others from the deep-sea ships—fruits of foreign lands,
Spices, scents and ivory, gems and silken bands.

Copra, pearl and coffee bean, chiles, hides, and wax,
Sisal, cedar, ebony, cocoa, rubber, flax,
Motor cars, machinery, iron rails and steel,
Music, mirrors, microscopes, rope and rickshaw wheel.

But outward freight or inward freight, borne by straining teams,
Each amid the merchandise holds its load of dreams—
Little, lonely wistful dreams from many a restless breast
For the incense laden Orient or the new lands of the West.

WANDERLURE

Whenever I try to settle down
Find anchorage at last,
There's something always comes to me
With memories of the past—
An olden smell, or an olden song,
Or even an olden pain
That wakens my heart to the wanderlure
And I must fare forth again.

Now, when I came back from Africa, and the soft and singing wind,
I left the Cross and the Southern stars a million miles behind,
I chained myself to a desk once more, and I said, "Well, here I be
With my dreams all safely stored away in the arms of memory"—
But only this morning I heard a song that a small street urchin sang,
And the heart of me with an old desire and an olden yearning rang.

I don't know why a nondescript song by a nondescript singer sung
Should have wakened mine ears to another tune in a weird and foreign tongue,
I don't know why a vision came of a silver and sapphire sea,
Of waves that crashed on a coral reef as they laughed in white-flecked glee,
A glimpse of palms, and a glistening beach, and a sun that shone on high,
And bare brown backs that gleamed with sweat as they toiled 'neath the blazing sky.

I don't know why, but this I know, that so was my tired heart stirred,
That sweet in a small boy's trivial song a far-off song was heard,
And once again there came the lure, the voice of a foreign land,
The lonely veldt, and the hills, the plains, the stretches of sun-swept sand;
And as it was in the long ago, once more they tuned their cries

To the heart of me and the lonely sea, and a
dream-sweet paradise.

So once again, as in days of old, I must travel
the comrade sea,
Must know the gulls, and the friendly sun, and
the stars' gay company—
For ever 'twas so, whensoever I tried to anchor
me strong and fast,
The hint of a dream of a tropic land came into
my heart at last,
Came into my heart with its olden lure and all
of its olden pain—
Till I slipped my moorings and headed me
South, a wanderer again!

For whenever I try to settle down
Find anchorage at last,
There's something always comes to me
With memories of the past—
An olden smell, or an olden song,
Or even an olden pain
That wakens my heart to the wanderlure
And I must fare forth again.

IN LIGHTER VEIN

THE SOLUTION

I've wanted to get married and I've asked a lot
of girls,
And some of them were pretty, with a wealth
of golden curls;
A few of them were homely, which mattered
not a jot,
And one or two had money, but they nearly
all had not.
They none would love for love alone, and what
had I to give?
They answered me, "These present days it costs
SO much to live."
The one or two with money said they surely
did not care
To share their wealth with anyone, not even on
the square;
And all of them informed me of the cost of all
their clothes,
And as my courage sank and sank the prices
rose and rose,

Till I again was in the slough of sorrow deep
and cold
And cursed the cost of living and the lack of
honest gold.
I've wanted to get married, and I'm going to
married be;
I'm going to take a little boat and sail 'way
'cross the sea;
I'm going to ask a Fiji girl in those far isles
divine
To leave her native lovers and to come and
just be mine,
For Fiji girls care not for clothes—their only
dress is paint—
And out in those delightful isles the cost of
living ain't!

A WOMAN'S WAY

She wrote him in a letter that she never would
love him;
She told him that she ne'er would be his wife;
She pointed out that ever had his prospects
been too slim,
That she would never share with him life's
strife.
Besides, there was her future, which would
never let her wed;
She hoped that he would not be too much
grieved,
She trusted he would always look upon her as
a friend—
And then she wept, because he, fool, believed!

'TIS A SAD STORY, MATES

A bachelor I, and you question me why,
And you look at me wroth and askance,
And I know that you blame, 'cause I don't share my name,
And like other chaps go take a chance.
But hark to the plea of most miserable me,
Of censure I've earned not a jot—
For the girls that would marry me I wouldn't marry,
And the ones that I would—would not.

There were Mabel and May—now what could I say?
For I loved to distraction Elaine,
But she didn't care, and oh, she was fair,
And so were Belle, Mollie and Jane.
Then Nan and Babette, I will never forget,
By far they were best of the lot—
But the girls that would marry me I wouldn't marry,
And the ones that I would—would not.

I would take your advice and be hitched in a
trice,
But what is a beggar to do
When he loves Guinevere in a manner that's
clear,
And is bored by the worship of Lou?
So this is my plea, ah, be gentle with me,
Of blame I deserve not a jot—
For the girls that would marry me I wouldn't
marry,
And the ones that I would—would not.

THE ENCOUNTER

Dressed in a silk of a wonderful yellow
Carefully held at the front and the side,
Stalked down Kampala a *pukka* Swahili
Wife of a chieftain and swelling with pride;
Swelling with pride but no more than her ankles
Weighted with bangles of silver and lead,
Ear lobes that hung round the lid of a jam-pot,
Streaked and beribboned the wool on her head,
Never before had been seen such a vision,
Never before such a lady of style,
Never before such a wonderful yellow
Knock you half dead at an eighth of a mile.

There by a tree stood my friend Mrs. Bumbo,
(Purely platonic, I give you my word.
She is the wife of a Private, Buganda—
Really your talk is disgrac'f'lly absurd!)
Dressed she was too in a flamboyant garment,
Crimson and purple with splashes of gold;

Shaved was her head like a Mexican poodle,
Boasted no ornaments, bizarre or bold.
But Mrs. Bumbo, who dotes on fine clothing,
Watched very closely the lady who passed,
"Hussy," she hissed, "what a terrible creature,
Such style in Mengo would never be classed!"

Wife of a chieftain and *pukka* Swahili,
Wife of a Private in the K. A. R's,
Chance thrown together one moment in passing,
Main Street Kampala besides the bazaars;
Both very swanky and very much woman,
Both very much of the Vere de la Vere—
What did I hear the Swahili dame utter?
"Heavens, the style of the women up here!"
Main Street Kampala, the land of Uganda,
Africa, Africa, far, far away!
What is the difference all the world over,
Woman is woman, as daylight is day!

WATER AND WINE

At the marriage feast of Cana when the guests
sat down to dine
The good Lord took the water and He changed
it into wine,
He changed it into wine, my lads, the Good
Book lets us know,
But where were prohibitionists two thousand
years ago?

Where were the prohibitionists,
The kill-joy prohibitionists,
To tell the Lord how wrong He was
A long time ago?

The Lord God gave us water, and the Lord
God gave us wine,
Each to his taste and let him be, no doubt was
His design.
But as the happy years rolled by the prohibi-
tionist came

To change the ruling of the Lord and promulgate His shame.

The bigot prohibitionist,
The kill-joy prohibitionist,
To change the ruling of the Lord,
And promulgate His shame.

The Lord God gave us darkness and the Lord God gave us light,
To ease the world's unhappiness He also gave delight.
Long, long ago He sanctioned it, He would not now decline
To grant us all the merriment that sparkles in good wine.

And yet the prohibitionists,
The "holy" prohibitionists,
Would kill the whole world's merriment,
And take away its wine.

But they will reap their harvest when each "Holier than God"

Creeps forth to final judgment from the shelter
of the sod,
And the good Lord greets them coldly as He
stands at Heaven's brink;
*"Go forth, forever thirsty, ye, with only wine
to drink!"*

"Go, kill-joy prohibitionists,
Ye bigot prohibitionists,
Forever be ye thirsty, lads,
With only wine to drink!"

NATIVE BEER

If your "boy" should come stumbling into the room
One night in a manner quite frisky,
Don't at once be possessed of a feeling of gloom
And fear he has drunk all your whisky.
He may or he mayn't, but this fact remains,
That sometimes a "boy" can possess a few brains,
And though of a bust-up he still shows the stains,
Be of cheer;
He has likely been having a glorious spree,
A perfectly marvellous jamboree,
A wonderfully roystering jubilee
On beer, beer, beer.

There's the beer of the Hun, and the beer from the Hop,
And the beer that's a tiny bit beery,
And any of them if in time you don't stop

Will make you uncommonly bleary;
But the *tembo* of Afric, that land off afar,
That's purchased and drunk at a small native bar,
That costs a few cents and is always at par
Is the cheer;
For a native can have quite a glorious spree,
A perfectly marvellous jamboree,
With a few cents from you and a few cents from me
For beer, beer, beer.

Now I do not agree with the smug or the prig,
That a curse lies in each glass of liquor.
Of course, if a man cannot help act a pig,
The sooner he quits it the quicker;
But a gallon of *tembo* if swallowed aright
Will make a man game for a flirt or a fight
And cause him to stay out-of-doors all the night
Feeling queer,
For a native can have quite a glorious spree,
A perfectly marvellous jamboree,
A wonderfully roystering jubilee—
On beer, beer, beer!

THE TRAGEDY

Ours was a short-lived idyll,
A dream of a Coney day,
As there in a hot-dog wagon,
By the side of the buns we lay;
And oh, but I loved you madly,
And oh, how I strove to please—
When you were a coy ham sandwich
And I was a chunk of cheese.

Ever I hoped you loved me,
My sandwich so pure and fair,
Till came to the shop a gourmand
Who captured you from me there,
Who stole you away and—ate you,
In spite of my sobbing pleas—
When you were a coy ham sandwich,
And I was a chunk of cheese.

Never will be such beauty,
And ne'er will I love again,

My heart is so crooly broken—
(That a cheese should know such pain!)
And I cry for that day of heaven—
To the echoing of the seas—
When you were a coy ham sandwich,
And I was a chunk of cheese.

ON THE OLD SLAVE ROAD

A dusky little maiden, with demurely dancing eyes,
A little water-carrier strayed out of paradise,
Wandered by me slowly, on her head a pitcher load,
Smiled at me in passing—on the old slave road.

Mayhap her glance was all for me as I went on my way,
Mayhap 'twas for another, I am not prepared to say;
But, seeing her disappearing in the dark, I swiftly strode
And caught her up and kissed her—on the old slave road.

A moment she was startled, and then she flashed surprise,
And anger gleamed and glistened in the wonder of her eyes,

But sudden changed to laughter as there crashed
the pitcher load,
And splashed us both with water—on the old
slave road.

She laughed, and, oh, her laughter was the
ripple of the sea;
Her lips were sweet as roses and the honey
from the bee;
Then she ordered me to leave her, but the sly
moon later showed
A couple strolling slowly—on the old slave road!

WHY NOT?

(*For Don Marquis*)

When you're working on the column,
And you're looking very solemn,
  With miles and miles of space to fill as swiftly flies the time;
When for the very soul of you,
The heart and head and whole of you,
  You cannot think an epigram, a poem, or a rhyme:—

When Hermione is on the blink,
And you are on the verge of drink,
  And Famous Love Affairs and such are cussedamnly shy;
When Aptronymics will not apt,
And deep in gloom your brain is wrapped,
  And Scipio the Flea has flit and oh, that flea is fly:—

When Bassett Digby writes no word,
From Hope and Hoff you have not heard,
And your H. W. has got his annual vacation,
When come no songs from J. A. D.
I wonder will you welcome me
With this here coy, coquettish pome by way of consolation?

I wonder will it find a place
To fill that yawning, empty space,
I wonder will it make a hit and give you quite a thrill?
I wonder if you'll gladly grin,
"Gee that's the stuff!"—and put it in,
I wonder will you publish this?—
You bet your life you will!

CHEERO! (*A Chantey*)

There is some as don't like liquor, be it red or
be it white.
(*Oh, let 'em go their way, me lads, an'
we'll steer clear.*)
There is some as thinks it sinful for a man to
take a drink,
That 'is soul is 'eaded 'ell-wards an' 'is body
for the clink,
An' from the pore damned sinful one they turn
away an' shrink.
(*Oh, let 'em go their way, me lads, an'
we'll steer clear.*)

There is some as is quite honest in their feelin's
an' dislikes.
(*Hats off to 'em in charity for they're
all right.*)
They pass up on the liquor but they do not
interfere
With 'em as finds their pleasure in a cheery
glass o' beer,
Nor clap 'em into irons like a ruddy mutineer.
(*Hats off to 'em in charity for they're
all right.*)

But the meanest limb o' mankind is the smug-face, bone-dry gent.
(*Oh, haul away, me bully boys, we're pullin' out to-day.*)
Who prates o' God an' goodness but who'd let a ship-mate die
Afore 'e'd pass to crackin' lips a drop o' rum or rye,
For, "Drink's a curse," 'e whines at you an' shifts a fishy eye.
(*Oh, haul away, me bully boys, we're pullin' out to-day.*)

An' 'ere's to ships and sailor-men an' 'ere's to wine an' water.
(*Water for the ships, me lads, an' sailors for the wine.*)
An' 'ere's to every far-off port where sailor-men go down.
An' ere's to 'em as makes the rum wherein a man can drown
The lubber's cant an' preachin' an' 'is 'alo an' 'is crown.
(*Oh, haul away, me 'earty lads, we're 'eaded for the Line!*)

MEMORIES

CHILDHOOD DREAMS

I was to conquer nations,
And You were to be their Queen,
And we both were to reign forever,
Till the last of the earth was seen.
Our lives were to be so happy,
All sunshine and choc'late creams—
'Twas thus in the days long over,
Children, we dreamed our dreams.

I am a struggling poet,
And You are a simple maid;
But life we are facing together,
Undaunted and unafraid,
And may be we're striving for something
That distantly, faintly gleams—
But are we not happier far, dear,
Than ever we dreamed in dreams?

MAGIC

Last night you played for me an olden tune,
So fraught with love, and memory and song,
That I again was young, and golden June
Into my heart crept smiling. I was strong.

As strong, my dear, as in the long ago,
Beneath the cloaking, comfortable sky,
Beside the grass and hedges wild a-row,
Beloved of Love we wandered, you and I.

But then the notes died down within the room,
And drooped your head that once shone burnished gold,
And all was still, save in the gath'ring gloom
There throbbed the heart of Time . . . and I was old.

A PHANTASY

I never in a garden at the close of evening walk
But that it seems the flowers to me in whisper language talk.

As children are the little buds, in any garden fair,
And nursed as such with tenderness and nursed they be with care.

So when I press my lips against the petals of a rose,
I do but kiss a tiny mouth that only sweetness knows.

And when a wounded, broken bloom droops sad and piteously,
I know somewhere a little child so droops, ah, patiently.

And never stirs the stranger with his scythe among the flowers

But that I see grim Death himself numbering
baby hours.

Then, sweet, above the whispering from out the
starlit dome,
I hear the voice of Him who comes to bear the
bruised things home.

CONQUERING FAITH

Soldier, Soldier, you have returned!
What have you seen?
Brave blood running red,
Shrapnel shrieking overhead,
And the spirit of the dead
That indomitably burned—
Where I've been, where I've been!

I have heard the victors' cries
Leading the advance;
I have seen Her shining eyes—
Unconquerable France;
And the Faith that nations know
When they join to strike the blow,
Courage aiding, 'gainst the foe—
Courage and Romance.

These I've heard and these I've seen—
(God's blessing on the dead!)
Home—a woman's brave, clear eyes,

Sometimes wistful, to the skies
  Gazing, overhead.
Brave heart and brave soul
  Hiding from the world
All the sorrow in her heart,
In her slowly breaking heart,
  That his death has hurled—
He who loved her and who died
In his young and lusty pride
  On the fields of France.

These I've heard, and these I've seen,
Where I've been, where I've been!

NOSTALGIA

The wind came o'er the sea this morn
  And touched me on the lips,
And my ears were filled with whisperings
  From old adventure ships;
From old ships and gold ships;
  And the west sun sinking slow;
A young heart that was my heart
  Full many a year ago.

There came the pungent odour and
  Tired perfume of a town
Where the coral streets were blinding white
  As the blazing sun shone down;
A spicy smell and an incense smell;
  And a far-off coolie's cry;
An old quest and a bold quest
  Under the southern sky.

Small wonder that the memories
  Woke in my heart the fret,

The dumb, dull, dormant longings for
The days I can't forget—
The rare days and the fair days,
And the song that stirred the sea,
A brave heart and a young heart
That was once the heart of me.

What wonder that these eyes were filled
With a blinding rush of tears
As they visioned through their wistfulness
The dreams of olden years;
The sweet dreams and the fleet dreams,
The dreams that would not stay—
Though a wild heart was a child heart,
And the dear world made for play!

NIGHT MEMORIES

I like to lie in my bed o' nights with the clean
white sheets around me,
And dreamily think of those other days and
those other nights that found me
Wrapped in a blanket, out on the veldt, my face
upturned to the sky,
And the song of the open filling my ears along
with the night wind's sigh.

I love to hear through the hum of the streets
the palm-tree's quivering note,
The thousand and one little lonely sounds that
bring a lump to the throat,
The jackal's cry, and the lion's grunt, and the
breath of sleeping men,
The cough of the sentry keeping watch—and I
hear them all again.

Hear them all as I lie in bed, and see with dear
memory's eyes

The Southern Cross and the brilliant stars lighting the southern skies;
See them all as I saw them of old, ere sleep came tumbling down
To bring me dreams of a far-away home in the arms of the turbulent town.

And then when dawn comes creeping to me here in my soft white bed
I waken up as a million thoughts come rushing into my head;
And somehow I miss the rustle and stir of an army, the short night done,
Waking to toil and the long, long trek of the long, long day begun.

For never a man with good red blood coursing his pulsing veins
Who's tramped the tropical open veldt, the desert, the hills, the plains,
But sometimes pines for the days gone by, the life so brave and free,
And the lonely nights in the lonely lands, over the lonely sea!

NIGHTMARE

Home, and dear peace,
Familiar faces and old familiar highways,
Byways,
And the sweet sun shining o'er it all. . . .

I could forget I ever had known war
So strange it seems,
So very long ago, away so far;
And yet in dreams,
Sometimes o' nights I hear again
The bullet's hiss, the cannon's roar, and the
broken cry
Of a soul in pain;
And I see before dim dream-filled eyes
A bleeding form that broken lies
Upturned to the sky,
His brains scattered, and no sound
From pain-distorted lips
That leer and grin. . . .

The clotted blood congeals upon the ground
Red, and crimson red, as drop by drop it drips,
Slow, Slow, Slow.
And fear possesses me,
A queer, strange, wild, uncanny, fear,
As the vultures swarm in the darkened sky,
And suddenly I know
That broken, bleeding, piteous thing to be
What once was I. . . .

And then I wake
White sheets about me,
And the well-remembered room.

IN PORT

Whenever I walk by the shore of the sea
And the soft winds blow,
An old pain awakes in my heart
And I have the wish to go—
To board the first salt-spattered craft,
Where the screeching winches whine,
With a bronzed old skipper upon the bridge,
And outward bound for the Line.

The fever lasts till the sunset falls
And the night dips down,
And I turn away from the haunting sea
To the wide-eyed town,
For I know that a light in a window there
Holds welcome out to me;
And peace for a wanderer's weary heart
Lies not across the sea.

Oh, up the world and down the world
A man would go

To still the ache in his wander heart
When the soft winds blow;
But he who has travelled the restless sea
Is woefully old and wise—
He knows that peace can be only found
Under his own home skies.

TWO MEETINGS

The damned old ambulance swayed and lurched
  Across the shell-torn road,
But stopped where a dusty column of men
  In marching order strode.
From out of the ranks you came to me
  To wish me luck of the best—
And you were marching the Eastward trail,
  And I was headed West.

When out of the hospital once again
  I marched the selfsame road,
I came to a spot where weirdly and wan
  Under the starshine showed
A poor little cross that bore your name.
  (God grant you kindliest rest!)
But I was bound for the Eastward, then,
  And you had travelled West.

A TROPIC NIGHT

The air sweet with jasmine and the scent
Of spices, and the salt tang of the sea;
A soft wind sighing in tall palms, the leaves
Rustling with a gentle, soothing song,
And swaying in the moonlight as a maid
Upon the arms of dream to music's lure.
Then sand, far stretching to the line of sea—
That lonely loveliness of silver sheen
And lazy breakers falling on the shore
In scintillating, diamond points of light.

Behind, the town of tinted walls
With roofs of palm-leaf thatch, and coral streets
Strange, winding in and out amid the palms,
Where palely, a still, tall, stately minaret
Rises in the moonlight to the stars,
Pointing, as from countless ages past

The mosques of men have risen to the skies
In mute acclaim of Him whose presence is
Forever 'mid the lovely, moonlit world
Long, long ago created that men's souls
Might dimly sense at last, in wonderment,
The glory, and the beauty that is God.

ROADS

Roads I have known come back to me
In memory again,
The far-flung roads to anywhere,
Sun-scorched, or drenched with rain,
Roads I have tramped with Happiness,
And Homesickness, and Pain.

One led across the sunset hills,
When I was very small,
And filled my heart with restlessness
As came the Wander call,
And I would go far travelling
When I was grown and tall.

And then one day I followed it—
The lure that called and led—
Across the open, lovely world
For "On, Go on!" it said,
And when one road was left behind
Another loomed ahead.

O Roadways I have loved and known!
O Roads I yet must know!
There is no peace for Wanderers
Upon this earth below.
I wish that I had never tramped
The old Road, long ago!

PRISONERED

I would forget old tropic skies,
A dear land I know,
Tall palm trees by a singing sea
Where soft winds blow,
For the memory breaks the heart of me
That longs so much to go.

And I can shut the vision out—
The little, bluest bay,
The stately liners anchored there,
The diving boys at play,
And the great sun, the glad sun,
Shining on the day.

The snake-like shore of silvered sand,
The tumbled little town,
The huddled houses blinding white
With palm-thatched roof, or brown
Or red tiled roofs, beside the streets
That wander up and down.

But I cannot still the old sounds—
The pungent winds that blow,
The coolies singing in the dark
Beneath the white stars glow,
And memory hurts the heart of me
That prisonered, cannot go.

THE LOST GRAVE

We buried him upon the veldt where ne'er before had trod
The foot of man. We left him there alone with Death and God.

We had no wood to make a cross, no stone to mark the place.
The winds blow strong. If we should seek we now would find no trace.

We only know that somewhere there in deepest sleep he lies
Amid the sun-scorched loneliness, under the sapphire skies.

And he had loved to tell us how he would go home some day
To the big town, his own town for his well-earned play.

And so I never walk along the crowded streets
of men
He loved so well, but that I see in memory
again—

The broad veldt, the lone veldt, the starlit skies,
And his lost grave in Africa where the night
wind sighs.

DARESSALAAM

Now Paris is a brave town, a fair town, a play town,
And London is a solemn place where traffic rumbles by,
And New York is a busy town, a young town, a gay town,
But Daressalaam lies lazy underneath a southern sky.

And Paris is for laughter, and London is for thought,
And New York is for money all the live-long day,
But if your heart seeks restfulness, and if for peace you've sought
There's Daressalaam that lazy lies beside a sapphire bay.

Once on a time, long, long ago, its streets of coral white

Re-echoed when slave-traders came for
freight to bear o'erseas;
And later on the transports grim unloaded in
the night,
And Daressalaam was noisy in the soft south-
ern breeze.

But now beside the hospital that looks across
the sea
The little graves in rows are white, (Ah,
youth that died too soon!)
The sentinel, tall palm-trees sigh and sway
seductively,
And Daressalaam lies lovely underneath a
southern moon.

And the streets are very quiet now, perhaps
again some day
With traffic and with commerce they will once
more crowded be;
But now there's only peacefulness, and a weary
heart would stray
In Daressalaam so lonely by a far-off south-
ern sea.

REMEMBRANCE

I try to think I never knew at all
The old life that lures me far away;
I try to think I do not hear it call,
And yet I hear it every night and day.

And even now I know in that far land,
A warm wind blows softly from the sea
Where naked children play upon the sand
Beneath the palms, as night falls suddenly.

There sounds the muezzin's cry to evening prayer,
And peace a moment reigns in the bazaars
As busy merchants to the temples fare
To greet their God, beneath the singing stars.

The oil lamps flare fickly in the wind,
The scent of incense permeates the air. . . .
Ah, heart of me that knew it all be blind,
Know not the dream that haunts us, lures us there!

PERFUMES

Roses in an old-world garden
  Fair and far away,
Sweet-pea and syringa walks
  Hollyhocks so gay. . . .

I never see a soft, green lawn
  Or scent a full-blown rose,
But my heart goes back to England,
  And a dear, old garden close.

Jasmine gives me Aden back.
  Incense brings Port Said.
Dust and sun, the naked veldt
  And rifles spitting lead.

Tang of tar wakes in my breast
  Storm-defying ships;
Southern seas in touch of salt
  To nostrils and to lips.

And though all bring memories,
One holds a spot apart,
Sacred to its loveliness,
Cornered in my heart.

Sweet-pea and syringa walks,
Hollyhocks so gay,
Roses and an old-world garden
Oh, so far away!

SEA-HUNGER

I wonder will I ever know again
The open waters of the lovely sea,
The gulls' screech, the waves' song,
The whisper of the wind
Around the rigging of a ship.
I wonder will I know once more
The queer, strange, pleasant pain
Of leaving well-loved lands for well-loved lands—
Cathay for Arcady.

I wonder will the days, the years be long
Before I greet again and find,
As found of old, with ecstacy and marvelling,
The hidden secrets that are only known
To those who sail the sea in ships
And love the sea.

THE WIFE'S VIGIL

I look down the long road that leads to the sea,
And you'd think to see me smiling that I was
gay and free,
But my heavy heart is breaking as I gaze along
the road
Away into that yesterday and the stars that
softly showed
The life of me, the soul of me, with laughter
on his lips,
Tramping down the bright road to outward-
faring ships.

The long road is a sad road that leads to the sea,
But the night is filled with wonderness and
haunting mystery,
And I'm praying God of Sailors though my
heart be cold and numb
That if I smiling keep the tryst perhaps at last
will come

The life of me, the soul of me, with laughter
on his lips,
Tramping up the old road from anchor-
riding ships.

But dark is the long road that leads to the sea,
And it's well I know the icy fear that gnaws
the heart of me—
For, "His ship is lost, his ship is lost," the
gaunt-eyed women say—
But I must keep the promised tryst, perhaps
will come some day
The life of me, the soul of me, with laughter
on his lips,
Tramping up the glad road from weather-
beaten ships.

THE TORCH

No better or no worse were we,
But when the summons came,
We flung our follies far behind
And tried to play the game,
And consecrated our young lives
Purged as with living flame.

We knew the zero hour and all
The wonder of the dawn,
The shrieking hell of shrapnel rain—
And now, they all are gone,
And of that star-eyed laughing crew
One, I alone, live on.

And oh, I dream of the Ideal,
The Faith our hearts gave place,
And pray to God to hold me true
And grant me strength and grace,
That when I die I may be free
To look *them* in the face.

OLD CAMPAIGNERS

(*For "Trot" Anderson*)

When we'd come home we met one night,
And lived them o'er again—
The tongue-parched treks to water holes
Across the sun-scorched plain,
Or through the bullet-hiding bush,
Where many a man was slain.

We spoke of far field hospitals—
White tents on whiter sands;
Of comrades known in crowded hours
Who waved a farewell hand,
And dying found the final trail
To the last and fairest land.

We talked of dangers we had known
(To memory now dear),
Of brimful days adventuring,
With Romance ever near;

And in the room old Wanderlure
Was there for us to hear.

And so we said how glad we were
To be safe home again;
But wistfulness was in your voice,
And in my heart stirred pain. . . .
I dared not look you in the eyes
That questioned mine in vain.

THE GARDEN

I know a lovely garden,
  Far away, and far away,
That is sweet with scent of roses
  All the sunny summer day;
And I never see that garden,
See in dreams that lovely garden,
But I think of God's own heaven
  Where the little angels play.

You enter from the croquet lawn
  And slowly step across
The ancient steps of rude-cut stone,
  Now velvet-soft with moss.

Along a little grassy walk,
  Syringa on each side,
To where the laughing lavender
  Is blossoming in pride.

And then another step or two
Into a sky-capped room,
Where everywhere, and everywhere,
The roses are in bloom.

You find a seat beside the pond,
And underneath a tree,
You hear the roses echoing
The low wind's melody.

And if because it is so sweet,
You fall to dreaming there—
Why, that is what that garden's for,
And who is there to care?

And so I love that garden,
Far away, and far away,
Where the fretful world of toiling
Is forgotten, flung away;
And I never see that garden,
See in dreams that lovely garden,
But I think of God's own heaven
Where the little angels play.

LITTLE LIGHTS

When the weary day is over
And I leave the city's ways,
My heart goes winging southwards
To the smiling sunny days;
To the palm-trees singing softly
As the still night clambers down,
And the little lights gleam brightly,
Gleam and glisten welcome brightly,
From the little white-walled houses
In a tiny tropic town.

I hear the muezzin calling
From the white-domed minaret,
And the magic of the summons
Holds and haunts my senses yet.
I watch the stars as, shyly,
They stoop to kiss the bay
That flings them back their glory
In a shower of golden spray.

Then my heart commences singing
As it sang so long ago,
Beneath the crooning palm-trees
In the sunset's fading glow,
When dear other days were over
And the nights came creeping down,
And I found them gleaming brightly—
Little lights all gleaming brightly
From the welcoming wee houses
In a far-off foreign town.

LOVE SONGS

SWEETHEART OF LONG AGO

Sweetheart of the Long Ago, the Southern Cross is shining,
The wind is in the palm-trees and the wind is o'er the sea,
It's whispering and whispering with all its old repining,
And oh! it comes a-stealing to the lonely heart of me.

It brings dear, dim, unbidden dreams, it brings unbidden glories,
The memory of the eyes of you with wonder glowing there,
The golden hours in golden days when life was fairy stories,
The laughter-loving lips of you, the perfume of your hair.

It whispers and it whispers, and I hear it softly sighing

The intimate and precious things that once
you said to me—
Ah, Sweetheart of the years ago, my saddened
heart is crying
With lonely, wistful longings for the dreams
that ne'er can be.

I WILL FORGET

I know that in a year or two
I will have quite forgotten you—
Your eyes grey-hazel and your hair
Wind-tossed about and glorious fair,
Your slim young form, your radiant ways
That lure me, haunt me through the days.

Some one will careless speak your name,
But it will never wake the flame
Of olden longing and desire,
For quenched will be the olden fire;
And yet 'twill stir in idleness
A thought of you with tenderness.

And I will dream a little while
Of your dear-loved caressing smile,
And wonder how and where you fared,
And wonder why I ever cared,
And think how in the long ago
I lived, and dreamed, and loved you so.

And then I'll shut old memory's door,
And smile, and think of you no more.
But now I cannot laugh or play
For thinking of you all the day. . . .
I wish the interim were done
And it were nineteen twenty one.

PERHAPS

Perhaps some day
  When the fighting and killing of men is o'er,
Perhaps I may. . . .

Perhaps I may when the lust of blood
And the flash of steel
  And the roar
Of guns that crash and blaze,
And the endless days
  No more
Are mine or me;
Perhaps there'll be
  One to welcome and caress,
  Bless,
And take into her heart—Me.

Perhaps I may
Some distant day
Claim my own—
(Ah, the hours flown

And the dreams dead!)
One who has not forgot,
The years remembered
The hopes far-flung,
The light that lies
In lovers' eyes
And never dies
When hearts are young.

LOSS

I thought that love would come to me
  Red flamed and burning,
And bear me down the orchid way
  Of no returning.

I dreamed that in a swoon of joy
  My wild heart would greet
The heart of love, the lips of love
  Passionate and sweet.

I did not know that love would come
  With no brave token,
With neither flaming fire nor flower,
  And no word spoken. . . .
Oh, lonely world, and empty skies!
  And my heart broken.

ROSE PETALS

I remember that her eyes were very blue
And sweet with swiftly changing lights
That melted into liquid loveliness
When she was glad and smiled;
Or in distress
Seemed as deep mountain pools of woe,
Mysterious and grey,
A-glow
With velvet shadows dancing
As sunshine sometimes dances
Through the ever-lovely, ever-friendly trees
In the breeze of an April day.

She was most gloriously tall
And still more gloriously fair,
A rose of loveliness;
Her hair
Deep golden brown with scent of wind-wooed
flowers;
I loved to press

My lips against its silken softness,
To caress,
Withdraw each comb and pin
And let it fall
Tumbling like the sunshine o'er her shoulders,
Hear her chide
Me gently for the havoc I had wrought
And then forgive me when I cried
Repentance,
Her eyes glistening as the stars when God
smiles,
And her lips, red, and moist, and near,
And very dear,
Whispering, murmuring in my ear,
Then creeping, smilingly apart,
Seductively, against my cheek, till lip to lip,
And form to form,
I crushed her to my heart,
As a man will crush the petals of a flower he
loves. . . .

KNOWLEDGE

I know this same sun blazes in the sky
In Araby where spices fill the air;
I know that even now the palm-trees sigh
Of love forgot and happiness out there.

I know that if I dare to shut my eyes,
My heart will winging go to olden hours,
To little happy peeps at paradise,
To brown hands garlanded with singing flowers.

I know that if I dream the silent night,
For all my grief a mantle will be made—
But, dare I face the questioning cold light,
The dawn at morning? Heart—I am afraid!

THE MESSAGE

If I did make the bitter tears
From lovely eyes to flow
Because I trampled on her heart,
Unknowing, long ago,
Go tell her now, O Little Song—
At last, I know.

Go tell her that whatever hurt,
Or pain, in days far flown,
Whatever careless deed of mine
Once made her heart to moan,
The same, and haunting hours of grief,
I too, have known.

Go tell her that the heart of me
Cries out to hers my pain,
The prayers unanswered, dreams unfilled,
The broken hopes, all vain;
Go ask her dear forgiveness, Song—
Her love again.

SO WORLDLY WISE WERE WE

So worldly wise were we that we could play
The game of Love with cynic touch and light,
Drink deep of lips beneath the starry night,
Walk arm-entwined a-down the singing day.

So versed were we in all the wiles and arts,
The tricks of Love, not one but that we knew,
We did not fear to think, or say, or do
The every prompting of our shallow hearts.

And then one day I kissed your lips good-bye,
And watched you going down your own far way.
We said "The game has ended in a tie."
And we were very cynical and gay.
I did not know your hurt. You never guessed
The grief that I too harboured in my breast.

TEARS ARE VAIN

Ay, men have gone to far Cathay,
And men have sailed to Spain,
And men have trekked in India,
And all come home again—
So dry your tears with laughter, dear,
For tears are only vain.

For tears are only vain, my dear—
The perfume of the rose
The ne'er the sweeter is for rain
It never, never knows;
And wind that is so cruel here
In far lands fairer blows.

And though he be in Africa,
Or on the Spanish Main,
Or lost in lure of Gobi's sands,
Be glad—and not in vain—
For in his heart there is a dream
And he'll come home again!

FOREVER

Forever and forever, dear,
To cherish and to hold;
More precious than the dreams of men
And all men's mortal gold;
More beautiful than southern stars
And sun on waters blue;
More wonderful than all the world—
The radiant heart of you.

Forever and forever, dear,
To love and to adore;
Naught else I ask of things that be
Till time throbs on no more;
Till time is dead, and tears are dead,
And all the world is done,
And stars light not the darkened skies,
Nor lonely moon, nor sun.

Forever and forever, dear,
(Ah, dream that is to be!)
But you and I of all the world
For all eternity. . . .
Oh, grant I may be worthy of
The trust reposed in me.

BECAUSE OF A DAY

Because of a day, one summer,
A sun-lit, leafy lane,
A slow wind blowing softly,
I will not tramp again
A sunny, woodland wilderness,
But that I will know pain.

No more will come caressing
The soft wind blowing free,
But that I will surrender
Unto the sorcery
Of sun, and wind and woodland lane,
And you in memory.

A little hour of dreaming,
(Ah, futile hope, and vain)
A moment's old-time gladness
Or ever comes the rain,
The ghost of your dear loveliness,
And then—heart-break and pain.

PORT O' CALL

For I was but a wanderer,
  Of all the world and over
Until it came that I met you,
  My fair friend, my lover.

And then no more I wished to roam,
  No lure lay in the skies.
I only sought the anchorage
  Of your dear, kind eyes.

But now my ship sails on again
  Across the lonely sea,
And my heart is sad as the sad night wind
  That sighs, tired, brokenly.

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